



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/754,146	01/09/2004	Thomas J. Devine		7479

7590 09/22/2004
Kenneth A. Roddy
Suite 100
2916 West T.C. Jester Boulevard
Houston, TX 77018

EXAMINER

MCKANE, ELIZABETH L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1744

DATE MAILED: 09/22/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/754,146

Applicant(s)

DEVINE ET AL.

Examiner

Leigh McKane

Art Unit

1744

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 and 12-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 11 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 09 January 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

3. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

4. Claims 1-4, 6-10, 12-15, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Devine et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,720,438) in view of Pearson (U.S. Patent No. 4,884,756).

Devine et al teaches a method and apparatus for processing and chemically disinfecting

infectious waste material identical to the claimed invention except that Devine et al employs two separate grinding steps **28,43** to achieve the necessary size reduction of the waste and does not spray the waste during the grinding steps.

Pearson et al, however, teaches that it was known in the art at the time of the invention to grind infectious waste in a preliminary grinding step using a single disintegrator **17** to achieve the necessary size reduction and to spray the waste at several points **29, 31, 33, 35** during the grinding. See col.2, lines 15-20. As smaller pieces present more surface area for disinfection, it would have been obvious to construct the grinder **28** of Devine et al in a manner such that it was capable of achieving the necessary size reduction on its own. This step would have made the holding step of **34** more efficient and would have eliminated the necessity of a second grinder and conveyor **45**.

Drying of the waste in Devine et al is achieved by using the hot air generated by the heated grinding plate **29**, which acts as a heater.

Devine et al discloses that a pair of diesel driven generators **19** provide the electrical power necessary to operate the system. It is deemed obvious to recycle the exhaust heat of the generators in order to speed the drying time of the waste.

5. Claims 5 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Devine et al and Pearson as applied to claims 1 and 8 above, and further in view of Buehler et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,364,589).

Devine et al teaches that the outlet of conveyor **50** can discharge to a compactor (col.7, lines 3-7). Moreover, Buehler et al discloses a method and apparatus for sterilizing infectious

Art Unit: 1744

waste wherein the apparatus discharges to a compactor **18**. As a compactor provides volume reduction of the waste, it would have been obvious in the invention of Devine et al.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claim 11 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

7. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: While Devine et al provides reasonable motivation to employ the exhaust heat of the diesel engine to dry the waste, Devine et al fails to teach or suggest connecting the exhaust to all of the grinding and grating means, the upwardly inclined screw conveyor, and the vertical screw conveyor.

Conclusion


8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Noetzel (U.S. Patent No. 5,213,774) teaches a mobile waste disinfection unit. Wilson et al (U.S. Patent No. 4,578,185) and Benson (U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2001/0016181) disclose waste disposal systems employing a disinfectant spray at the grinding means.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Leigh McKane whose telephone number is 571-272-1275. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Wednesday (7:15 am-4:45 pm).

Art Unit: 1744

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert J. Warden can be reached on 571-272-1275. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Leigh McKane
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1744

elm
20 September 2004